

Rhode-Island Baptist.

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The difference between Foreknowledge and Predestination.

For the want of an accurate discrimination between the prescience and determinations of God, a number of good and pious people fall into the doctrines of Calvin. It is frequently said that no difference can be discerned between them. This assertion is admitted by some, who do not exercise on the subject, proper reflection. These, scarcely willing to believe the decree system, because, they are in heart, Arminians, or lovers of a free gospel, when arguing in favour of moral agency and free grace, are sometimes pressed with the argument of God's foreknowledge. Not having given the point a clear investigation, they strike their colours, for want of a proper reply. The following thoughts, it is hoped, will set this subject in a fair light, and shew beyond all contradiction, that there is a wide and substantial difference between the two things—such a difference, as that one need, never, be mistaken for the other—such a difference, as that it is impossible to blend them together. One can as easily bring together the antipodes, or the north and south pole—or the east and the west—or reconcile the greatest imaginable absurdities, as to unite them.

In the first place, let us consult our lexicons. What shall we find in them? The definition of "Foreknowledge" is, "*knowledge of that which has not yet*

happened." The definition of the verb "to predestinate," is given thus, "*To appoint beforehand by irreversible decree.*" "Predestination," therefore means, that, which is appointed beforehand by irreversible decree. Here then, we see, that these words or terms, have very *different* significations, and that there is no difficulty in perceiving this difference, and that it is as real, as the difference in the sense of any two words which can be named in the English language.

In the second, we may illustrate the difference in the following manner. Take one of the prophets, Moses, for instance, when he predicted that Christ should be raised up among his brethren. Said he to the Hebrews, "the Lord thy God, will raise up unto thee a prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." He, therefore, *foreknew* that such a personage would be raised up—but did he *predestinate* it? Was it according to his purpose or decree that the Saviour came? To suppose this were not only absurd, but impious. Take any other seer; if you please, Isaiah. Among his predictions, is that, of the overthrow of Tyre. He *foreknew* that this famous city would be destroyed, but it was not his to pre-ordain it. The same prophecy informs us "the Lord of hosts hath purposed it." Thus we find, that one may have a *foreknowledge* of what he has not *predestinated*. And it is as easy to conceive this of our Creator, as of any other being. In fact we must do this. If not we make him the efficient cause of the iniquities of men. This will appear by the following supposition. A man commits burglary, or arson, or murder; who will pretend to say that this was not fore-known of God? But did he, therefore, predestinate it? However shocking the thought, yet it must be true, if there be not a radical distinction between prescience and fore-ordination. But we have shown this distinction, without the aid of such a thought.

It may be further seen in the fact, that the determinations of men are altogether different from their prophetick vision, which may be thus demonstrated. One

of the prophets, might have purposed to perform a particular deed, at some future time. Death, and a thousand other providences of God, might have prevented him. But if he *foreknew* what the Lord had purposed respecting a city or nation, that knowledge was certain, and the event to which it related, would surely occur; no providence or casualty could hinder it. The Lord "is of one mind, who can turn him?"

We may, in the fourth place, see this distinction, in the light of the sacred writings. Foreknowledge and predestination, are terms, never used in the same sense in the bible. Paul, in writing to the Romans, said, "whom he [God] did *foreknow*, he also did *predestinate* to be conformed to the image of his son." If these terms mean the same thing, the apostle was guilty of an inexcusable tautology, and the more so, as he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. The unsophisticated sense must be this: Whom God foresaw were willing to receive the Saviour, he determined should, although "the devil and his angels" might endeavour to prevent it. Nor may it be deemed a conduct unworthy of any of the divine attributes or perfections, that he should predestinate under such circumstances. Nor does it derogate in the least from his greatness, majesty, or glory, that he should predestinate only such, as were willing to be saved. In truth, the thought that he does, is the only one consistent with those attributes and perfections and makes the excellency of all the more surpassing. What! can it be imagined with any truth, that such a purpose in the Deity, would not be worthy of him and equal to his highest glory? Surely not? But for such a purpose, the poor trembling sinner desirous of believing in Jesus, might not have been able to do so. The enemy of all righteousness had proved too powerful for him, as he had done for Peter, when solicitous to sift him as wheat, had not the Saviour prayed for him. In consideration of this, God determines that, he who is willing to become a disciple of his son, shall become so, in

spite of earth and hell. Herein is the safety of penitent sinners. For such a decree, therefore, let every one call upon his soul, to magnify the name of the Lord.

The sense of the apostle, in the above passage, beautifully accords with the sentiment of another passage, in the New-Testament, written by the apostle Peter.—Speaking of christians he says, that they are the “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father:” which is, as though he had said, “ye strangers [or christians] scattered throughout Pontus and other places, God foreseeing, that you being assisted by his grace, would become followers of Christ, has, by his electing love, or purpose, or decree, secured to you this delightful privilege.

Thus, we see, the scriptures themselves, whence we should draw all our doctrine of divine truth, keep up a marked distinction between foreknowledge and predestination. Let them be our guide, and we shall not err or stumble. To borrow a thought from one of the sacred writers, they are a light shining in a dark place.

For the Rhode-Island Baptist.

FREE SALVATION.

Rev. Mr. Brown, Sir—I had, not long since, some, to me, pleasing reflections, on the subject which you have so warmly and I trust heartily espoused in the R. I. Baptist. I mean the doctrine of Free Salvation. If you think they would be in some small degree interesting to your readers, you are at liberty to give them a place in some future number of that work. I shall entitle them—some reasons for believing the doctrines of Free Salvation, by which I mean that Christ, by the grace of God, hath tasted death for every man, that salvation is possible for all, and that Election and Perseverance to eternal life, are *conditional*. This system represents the character of the great and blessed God

in a most interesting and amiable light. 1st. His goodness. This is as extensive as it is great. It is not limited to the elect—favourites of heaven. According to the spirit of this system, the Lord is good unto *all*, his tender mercies are over *all* his works. I know God is good to me. This assures me, he is so to others; that while I participate in his bounty, the red man in the western wilderness, the wandering Arab, the poor African, the ignorant Hottentot and the frozen Norwegian are the subjects of his beneficence, and the objects of his mercy. He is good to Jacob, he is not absolutely merciless to Esau. The language of the following scriptures is also that of these doctrines. “God so loved the *world* that he gave his only-begotten son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” “Christ is the true light, which lighteth *every* man that cometh into the world.” “The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men.” Through the medium of this system, I am favoured with an almost overwhelming sense of the divine goodness. I behold the eternal Jehovah, sitting on the throne of his glory, holding in his right hand a sceptre; not a rod of iron, with which to dash in pieces the nations; but the golden sceptre of mercy. In his left hand is seen the cup of salvation. He uttereth his voice, not as when a lion roareth, it is the voice of pity and compassion, the sweet accents of mercy. “Unto you, O man, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.” “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

2d. The justice of God, on this system, appears no less interesting than his goodness. God is just as well as merciful, yet he will by no means clear the guilty. This justice, however, has no affinity to cruelty or revenge. It is not executed on the hapless Reprobates, doomed in the awful councils of eternity to unconditional and ever-during destruction; it is not a

mysterious attribute of an all-powerful Sovereign, who displays it merely to show that he can display it, and who exerts it on myriads of his intelligent creatures, for no other reason than because it is his sovereign pleasure; but it is an attribute of the holy and righteous God, which he exerts in defence of his righteous laws and in support of his government over his intellectual creatures. When they rebel, when his mercy and grace and all the manifestations of his boundless love cannot reclaim them, when they harden their neck, despise all his counsels and all his reproofs; then he laughs at their calamities, and mocks when their fear cometh, then is the flaming sword of his justice unsheathed, that he may execute upon them all the fierceness of his displeasure, and punish them in exact proportion to the magnitude of their sins. In this view of the justice of God, nothing is seen inconsistent with the most perfect goodness. The wicked only are punished, not those who were made so by (*horribile decretum*) decrees, but those who have made themselves wicked by their own avoidable crimes. How equitable will appear their punishment even to themselves. They cannot say, it was fate, or necessity, or the unjust decrees of their maker, which has brought upon them their sufferings. They will recollect that God loved them, that Christ died for them, that a gracious ability was given them by which they might have repented and believed the gospel, and been the heirs of eternal glory. It was their sins, their cruel sins that brought them into this place of torment. They have done despite to the spirit of grace, trampled upon the blood of the covenant and sinned away the day of God's merciful visitation. For this reason the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. The consciousness that they have so richly merited the divine displeasure and the miseries which they suffer will haunt them in eternity and compose the bitterest ingredient in their cup of sorrow. The throne of the great Eternal will be spotless, and in view of the bright display of the Justice of God in the condemnation of the wicked; the four and twen-

ty elders will fall down before him that sits upon the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever and cast their crowns before the throne saying—Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power ; for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created. O. F. B.

DESULTORY THOUGHTS.

The arguments of Calvinists against a free salvation, have been so oft confuted, that the remark which christians sometime apply to infidels, who have attacked divine revelation, may be applied to them. It is this : that their renewed attacks are but the bare echoes of their former ones. They offer no argument, that has not been a thousand times refuted. We would not by any means, be understood to place our calvinistick brethren, in the same common cause with infidels, whatever may be our opinion of their anti-biblical senecal sentiments, or the effect which they have on men of rational powers ; for among them are to be found, as among other christians, some of the salt of the earth. We cannot but deeply regret, however, that they entertain such views of doctrine as they do—views, which we sincerely believe, have made more universalists, and more outright unbelievers, than all the single or combined attacks of infidels ; and which will still produce these effects, in proportion to the manner and frequency of their exhibition. It has been stated by an intelligent gentleman of this town, that the universalist society in this place would make more converts, by employing a calvinistick gentleman who has often preached in Providence within a year, than they could by any other means. Such a remark as this should teach the lovers of evangelical truth, who hold calvinistick sentiments, to examine their opinions. This faithfully done, might give them better, more enlightened and more enlarged views of the grace of God,

which bringeth salvation, and lead them to combine with their brethren who possess these views, to promote the truth on the earth. The revolutions which calvinism has undergone, augur well for its final dissolution. It is almost another thing, in this region, from what it was twenty or thirty years ago. This fact, and the signs of the times, persuade us, that it will be abandoned. We confidently believe that it cannot stand the test of calm unprejudiced investigation, any more than the fooleries of the church of Rome, any more than darkness can bear the presence of light, or prevail at noon-day, without the total eclipse of the sun. And since we have closely attended to this subject, we have been astonished how men of reasoning powers ever could have adopted a system, which to us, is so unlike the perfections and glory of the great eternal. Nothing allays this astonishment but the recollection of man's fallibility, and that there is no opinion however absurd but what has its advocates. Even Swedenborgianism of all moon-struck systems, the most like moon-shine, is on the increase; and Ann Lee, has her worshippers. The thought of this knight-errantry of the human mind brings to our memory a reflection we had not long since, on the value of the Bible, and the propriety of that reflection. The reflection was this: That the bible might prevent us, under certain circumstances, from imbibing the error, that men might live on this earth forever; that is, that they should not die—as it declares, that “it is appointed for all men once to die.” Such a reflection had it been suggested to any one, in the time of it, might have incurred ridicule, as weak and puerile, it might have been said that, so absurd a sentiment, could not possibly obtain an advocate. Its propriety is seen in the fact, that a sect of heretics have actually arisen in (we believe) the western part of New-York, propagating this very absurdity. P. L.

Prov, 21. 17. He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

METAPHYSICAL.

(Concluded from our last.)

3dly. Liberty is opposed to necessity and in this sense it extends to the determinations of the will only, and not to what is consequent to the will.

In every voluntary action, the determination of the will is the first part of the action, upon which alone the moral estimation of it depends. It has been made a question among philosophers, whether, in every instance, this determination be the necessary consequence of the constitution of the person, and the circumstances in which he is placed? Or whether, he had not power, in many cases, to determine this way or that?

This has, by some, been called the philosophical notion of liberty and necessity; but it is by no means peculiar to philosophers. The lowest of the vulgar have in all ages, been prone to have recourse to this necessity, to exculpate themselves or their friends in what they do wrong, though in the general tenor of their conduct, they act upon the contrary principle. Whether this notion of moral liberty be conceivable or not every man must judge for himself. To me there appears no difficulty in conceiving it. I consider the determination of the will as an effect. This effect must have a cause which had power to produce it; and the cause must be either the person himself, whose will it is, or some other being. The first is as easily conceived as the last. If the person was the cause of that determination of his own will, he was free in that action and it is justly imputed to him, whether it be good or bad. But, if another being was the cause of this determination, either by producing it immediately, or by means and instruments under his direction, then the determination is the act and deed of that being, and is solely imputable to him.

But it is said, "that nothing is in our power but what depends upon the will, and therefore the will

itself cannot be in our power. I answer, that this is a fallacy arising from taking a common saying in a sense which it never was intended to convey, and in a sense contrary to what it necessarily implies.

In common life, when men speak of what is, or is not, in a man's power, they attend only to the external and visible effects, which only can be perceived, and which only can affect them. Of these, it is true, that nothing is in a man's power, but what depends upon his will, and this is all that is meant by this common saying.

But this is so far from excluding his will from being in his power, that it necessarily implies it. For to say that what depends upon the will is in a man's power, but the will is not in his power, is to say that the end is in his power but the means necessary to that end are not in his power, which is a contradiction.

In many propositions which we express universally, there is an exception necessarily implied, and therefore always understood. Thus when we say that all things depend upon God, God himself is necessarily excepted. In like manner when we say, that all that is in our power depends upon the will, the will itself is necessarily excepted; for if the will be not, nothing else can be in our power. Every effect must be in the power of its cause. The determination of the will is an effect, and therefore must be in the power of its cause, whether that cause be the agent himself, or some other being.

From what has been said in this chapter I hope the notion of moral liberty will be distinctly understood, and that it appears that this notion is neither inconceivable, nor involves any absurdity or contradiction.

REID.

ON THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

Few, perhaps, would suppose, that any traces of lava are to be found in the Bible; yet, among the numerous interesting phenomena of nature described in

the most ancient documents of that invaluable book, we not only meet with this substance, but, if I mistake not, volcanick mountains, and hot springs, such as exist in great abundance in Iceland. The prophet Nahum declares, in his sublime description of the majesty of God, that "the mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is *burned* at his presence : his fury is poured out *like fire*, and the rocks are thrown down by him," chap. i. 5, 6. And Jeremiah evidently takes his image from a volcano, when he saith, "Behold, I am against thee, O *destroying mountain*, saith the Lord, which *destroyest* all the earth, and I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt *mountain*. And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations, but thou shalt be *desolate* for ever, saith the Lord," li. 25, 26. The passage which contains the most unequivocal reference to an eruption of lava, is that in which Eliphaz insidiously reminds Job of the catastrophe which unexpectedly seized the abandoned inhabitants of the cities of the plain :

"Hast thou observed the ancient tract,
That was trodden by wicked mortals
Who were arrested of a sudden,
Whose foundation is a *molten flood* ;
Who said to God : Depart from us,
What can Shaddai do to us ?
Though he had filled their houses with wealth,
(Far from me be the counsel of the wicked !)
The righteous beheld and rejoiced,
The innocent laughed them to scorn ;
Surely their substance was carried away,
And their riches devoured by fire.— Chap. xxii. 15—20.

It is, indeed, commonly believed that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was effected by a shower of fire and brimstone miraculously produced in the regions of the air, and Gen. xix. 24, has been adduced in support of the opinion. But the words, "The Lord rained brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven," are susceptible of a very different interpretation.

It is well known that, in Scripture, every operation of nature is directly ascribed to God. All her diversified instruments are his servants, and what is performed by them is said to be done by himself.

“ The winds are his messengers ;
His servants, flames of fire.”

Earthquakes, storms, inundations, drought, famine, pestilence, and war, are uniformly represented as coming from the Ruler of the universe. When, therefore, the combustible matter in question is declared to proceed from Jehovah, we are, in like manner, to understand the historian as referring the awful catastrophe immediately to God as the avenger of iniquity ; though, in bringing it about, he might, as in other instances, have availed himself of natural causes. From the geologick notices contained in the Bible, relative to the neighbourhood of the devoted cities, it would appear, that it abounded with inflammable substances, and, as will presently be shewn, was most probably at some earlier period subjected to volcanick revolutions. Nothing farther, then, was necessary, than to set on fire the bitumen, sulphur, &c. that were in the bowels of the earth, which, ravaging with violent fury, an earthquake ensued, and vent being given to the subterraneous elements, a torrent of melted matter was poured forth, that, descending into the plain, carried destruction to its inhabitants, cities, villages, fields, and whatever came in its way. The quantities of sulphur, pumice, and ashes, poured by the volcano to an immense height in the air, and falling from that elevation, might, with strict propriety, be said to have been “rained from heaven.” In allusion to this catastrophe, God is said to rain on the wicked, hot ashes, fire, and brimstone, Psalm xi. 6. Mr. HOLM, in his account of the eruption of the Skapta volcano, says ; “The *whole atmosphere* was filled with sand, dust, and *brimstone*, so thick as to occasion a continual darkness. The pumice which fell on the villages, being *red hot*, did

considerable damage.—Along with the pumice stones, there fell a great quantity of a dirty substance like *pitch*, rolled up sometimes in the form of small balls, and sometimes like rings or garlands. The falling of these *hot substances* was attended with great mischief, as they totally destroyed all manner of vegetation that they came near.”

That, besides the fiery sulphureous shower described by Moses, an inundation of lava overtook those cities, is stated in the most express terms, in the passage quoted from Job. Their inhabitants were *arrested* by its torrents. It surrounded their habitations, and cut off all way of escape, *carried before it* their substance, *devoured* their riches with its raging *flames*, and so completely laid waste the spot where they dwelt, that nothing now remained but a *stream of melted matter*. The same fact is obviously implied in the description of circumstances connected with Lot's escape. Why was he prohibited from lingering in any part of the low land, if not because he would there be exposed to the lava? And what reason can be assigned for his obtaining leave to stop in Zoar; but its lying at some distance from the spot where the lava began to act, as likewise on an elevation whence he could survey the approaching ruin, and retire before the stream reached that place? We accordingly find, that however keen he was on staying there at first, he quitted it before night, for a still more elevated and a safer retreat. “And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, for he feared to dwell in Zoar,” verse 30. How natural is the incrustation of his wife on the same hypothesis? Remaining in a lower part of the valley, and looking with a wishful eye towards Sodom, she was surrounded, ere she was aware, by the lava, which, rising and swelling, at length reached her where she stood; so that being, as it were, embalmed by the balso-bituminous mass, she became a conspicuous beacon and admonitory example to future generations. The power of this asphaltic substance in preserving from corruption, is evident, from its being employed by

the Egyptians for embalming their mummies. Diod. Sic. Bib. Hist. lib. xix. c. 109. She is said to have been converted into a pillar of *salt*, on account of the quantity of that substance which appeared in the crust, and its abundance in those regions is notorious, both from sacred and profane history: so much so, that the lake which now fills the caverns made by the earthquake, has, among other names, that of the "Salt Sea."—*Henderson*.

NEST OF BIRDS.

How admirably is the providence of the great Creator displayed in the nests of birds! Who can contemplate without emotion this divine beneficence, which bestows ingenuity on the weak, and foresight on the thoughtless!

No sooner have the trees expanded their first blossoms, than a thousand diminutive artisans begin their labours on every side. These convey long straws into the hole of an ancient wall, those construct buildings in the windows of a church; others rob the horse of his hair, or carry off the wool, torn by the jagged thorn from the back of the sheep. There wood-cutters cross small twigs in the waving summit of a tree; here spinsters collect silk from a thistle. A thousand palaces are reared, and every palace is a nest; each nest witnesses the most pleasing changes; first a brilliant egg, then a young one covered with down. This tender nestling becomes fledged; his mother instructs him by degrees to rise up on his bed. He soon acquires strength to perch on the edge of his cradle, from which he takes the first survey of nature. With mingled terror and transport, he drops down among his brothers and sisters, who have not yet beheld this magnificent sight; but, summoned by the voice of his parents, he rises a second time from his couch, and this youthful monarch of the air, whose head is still encircled by

the crown of infancy, already ventures to contemplate the undulating summits of the pines, and the abysses of verdure beneath the paternal oak. Encouraged by his mother, he trusts himself upon the branch, and after this first step, all nature is his own. And yet, while the forests rejoice to see their new guest attempt his first flight through the atmosphere, an aged bird, who feels his strength forsake him, alights beside the current; there, solitary and resigned, he patiently awaits death, on the brink of the same stream where he sung his loves, and beneath the trees which still bear his nest and his harmonious posterity.

This is the proper place for remarking another law of nature. In the class of small birds, the eggs are commonly painted with one of the prevailing colours of the male. The bulfinch builds in the hawthorn, the gooseberry, and other bushes of our gardens; her eggs are slate coloured, like the plumage of her back. We recollect having once found one of these nests in a rose bush; it resembled a shell of mother of pearl, containing four blue gems; a rose, bathed in the dews of morning was suspended above it; the male bulfinch sat motionless on a neighbouring shrub, like a flower of purple and azure. These objects were reflected in the water of a stream, together with the shade of an aged walnut-tree, which served as a back-ground to the scene, and behind which appeared the ruddy tints of the morning. In this little picture the Almighty conveyed to us an idea of the graces with which he has decked all nature.

Among the larger birds the law respecting the colour of the egg varies; it is guided by more important harmonies, in proportion to the vigour of the animal to which it belongs. We suspect, that in general, the egg is white among those birds, the male of which has several females, or among those whose plumage has no fixed colour for the species. In the classes which frequent the waters and the forests, and build their nests, the one on the sea, the other in the summits of lofty trees, the egg is generally of a bluish green, and

if we may be allowed the expression, of the same tint as the elements by which it is surrounded. Certain birds which reside on the tops of ancient and deserted towers, have green eggs like ivy, or reddish like the old buildings they inhabit. It is, therefore, a law, which may be considered as invariable, that the bird displays in her egg the emblem of her loves, her manners, and her destinies. By the mere inspection of this brittle monument we are enabled to tell to what tribe it belonged, what were its dress, manners and habits ; if it passed days of danger on the seas, or if, more happy, it led a pastoral life ; if it was tame or wild, and inhabited the mountain or the valley. The antiquary of the forests is conducted by a science much less equivocal than the antiquary of the cities ; a scathed oak with all its mosses, proclaims much more plainly the hand that gave it existence, than a ruined column declares by what architect it was reared. Among men, tombs are the record of their history ; nature, on the contrary, fixes her impression only upon life ; she requires neither granite nor marble to perpetuate what she writes. Time has destroyed the annals of the sovereigns of Memphis, once inscribed on their funeral pyramids, but has he been able to efface a single letter of the history marked on the egg shell of the Egyptian ibis ?—*Chateaubriand.*

Remarks on the sovereignty of God, in reference to the enjoyment of believers.

There are christians, and there are christian teachers, who entertain some views of the Divine Sovereignty which appear to have a very discouraging aspect on the spiritual enjoyments of believers. They conceive that in the administration of the kingdom of grace God, by a pure act of sovereignty, frequently withdraws from his people, the light of his countenance, and suspends the joys of his salvation, when no cause

of that withdrawment, or of that suspension, is to be found on their part. To my mind, ideas appear to be unworthy of the divine character, and irreconcilable with the tenor of both of the promises of divine influence, and of the injunctions to rejoice without ceasing in the Lord. On this point, my views precisely coincide with those of a valued and enlightened friend, whose words I will take the liberty to adopt:* "If we are destitute of Christian comfort and joy, it is, I think, of essential importance, to have the conviction deeply impressed upon our minds, that the cause is in ourselves—entirely in ourselves. It is not God that withdraws from us; but we that withdraw from God. When we have withdrawn, indeed, and by our back-sliding, deprived ourselves of the "joy of the Lord," and of the light of his countenance," he may make us to feel our folly and our sin, by refraining, for a time, from restoring it. But still, let us remember, that the cause is in us; and that, in every instance in which the effect does not arise from bodily or mental disorder, the cause is, in its nature, criminal. The manner in which some have spoken and written respecting the want of religious comfort, as arising from the sovereign hiding of God's countenance, while I am satisfied that it is not, at least in general, their intention, to deny that there is a cause, and that that cause is sin in us, has yet frequently appeared to me too much calculated to produce and to foster an impression of a different kind, to lead us, when in this situation, or when we see others in it, to look upon ourselves, or on our fellow-professors, rather as tried in the course of Divine Providence, than as decidedly "sinning against our own souls;" and thus, in either case, to pity, rather than to condemn."—*Burder*.

*Dr. Wardlaw, in his discourse on the influence of the Holy Spirit.

For the Rhode-Island Baptist.

DYING MOMENTS.

"Though I walk through the gloomy vale
Where death and all its terrors are,
My heart and hope shall never fail,
For God my shepherd's with me there." WATTS.

MR. EDITOR—During several years past, I have been in the habit of writing down some of the most striking incidents which I met with in the course of my reading, for my own improvement and edification, especially the dying testimonies of eminent saints. Some of these, I find, in looking them over are very interesting. I send you a few of them for insertion (if you think proper) in the Rhode-Island Baptist. "Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his" O. F. B.

"When Mr. Henry was dying, he said to a friend, "you have been used to take notice of the sayings of dying men; this is mine: "That a life spent in the service of God and communion with him, is the most comfortable and pleasant life that any one can live in this world."

Dr. Evans in his last moments said, "All is well, all is well."

Dr. Watts said, "I bless God, I can lie down with comfort at night, unsolicitous whether I awake in this world or another."

Dr. Gill said, I have nothing to make me uneasy," and his last words were, "O my Father! my Father!"

The last words of Rev. Richard Emery, were, "My soul is wrapped up in the vision's of God's love."

Washburn Peck was heard a few hours before his death to repeat,

"No foot of land do I possess,
No cottage in the wilderness,
A poor way-faring man;
I lodge awhile in tents below,
And gladly wander to and fro;
'Till I my Canaan gain."

After which, with a countenance beaming with joy, he said, "glory! glory! glory! I shall soon get to heaven."

NATIONAL PATRONAGE OF BIBLE SOCIETIES.

Russia.—The Bibles as well as letters of the Russian Bible Society, are transported throughout this vast empire, at the publick expense. The Emperour presented the Society with a spacious edifice for the transaction of its business; gave 25,000 rubles to its funds, and desired to be considered as a member, with an annual subscription of 10,000 rubles.

Prussia.—The King has exempted the letters of the Prussian Bible Society, and of its Auxiliaries, from postage.

Sweden.—The King has ordered a collection to be made once a year in all the churches of the diocess of Gottenburg, for the Gottenburg Bible Society. He accepted the office of Patron of the Swedish Bible Society, and has exempted its letters and parcels from postage. He likewise ordered a collection to be made in every church in the kingdom for the purpose of supplying the poor with Bibles.

Denmark.—The King gave 4000 dollars to the Danish Bible Society, and reduced the postage on Bibles.

Saxony.—The government granted to the Saxon Bible Society, the privilege of receiving letters and parcels free of postage.

Wurtemberg.—The King officially announced his approbation of the Wurtemberg Bible Society, and made a donation to its funds.

France.—The government allowed the Paris Bible Society to import Bibles free of duty. The Duke D'Angouleme, with the concurrence of the King, addressed a letter to the society, expressing his approbation of its designs. The Duke de Cazes, at the time Prime Minister, gave one thousand livres to the Society.

Great Britain. The government invariably remits the duties on the books imported by the British and Foreign Bible Society.—*Bost. Rec.*

THE CAUSE OF THE ARMINIAN OR PRIMITIVE BAPTISTS.

Copy of a letter from Elder Reuben Allen to the Editor of the Religious Informer, dated Pawtucket, R. I. Oct. 28, 1823.

After a silence of a number of months, I take my pen again to write you, and the most pleasing subject is that of the prosperity of Zion. I would now state some things as respects this part of the Church of God, that composes this Quarterly Meeting. From our returns at the last Q. M. we learn that about four years ago, there was but one church in this region,* denominated Freewill-Baptists, consisting of about sixty members. We have now seven churches, and about five hundred members. I think that we ought to be so far from being discouraged, that every heart ought to glow with love to God, and every member be engaged for the farther spread of his name; and notwithstanding our prosperity, we have reason to pray like the prophet, "O Lord, revive thy work." The good seed was first planted by brother J. Colby, that now rests from his labour; is his name, never to be forgotten in this part of the land. He has been succeeded by other faithful labourers, and the harvest has been glorious.

Two years ago, in the providence of the Lord, I was permitted to come into this part of the land, to enjoy the fruits of their faithful labour, and since that time, have felt a concern, for the welfare of the people, and in all our trials, have enjoyed much good; but have to

*Although Elder Allen may be correct in asserting that there was but one church, yet we must add, that the Baptists in Rhode-Island, are generally of the Arminian sentiment, though many of them, are at present in connexion with Calvinistick churches.

acknowledge that I have done but little, but have had the pleasure of seeing some churches gathered, and of baptizing one hundred and twenty in that term of time; eighty for the last eight months, and hope that I shall be so humble, that I shall yet see more. But when I see what others have done, and how little I do, I many times doubt whether the Lord has ever called me to the work; yet I feel a woe, if I think of laying down my testimony, and my real cry is, Lord help. The brethren are well united, and we hope that the five hundred will be increased to thousands. Finally brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may prosper among us, and many more be found the happy sharers in his grace, and that we as preachers may be more wise and humble. Farewell.

REUBEN ALLEN.

Copy of a letter from Brother Thomas Park, to the Editor, Prospect, Me. November 2d, 1823.

BROTHER CHASE,

I think it is my duty to transmit to you some account of the wonderful displays of almighty grace, in the conversion of dear sinners in this section of the country.

About the middle of September last, the Lord began to revive the work of reformation in the western section of this town among the Methodist Brethren, and since that time, has continued to pour out of his spirit in a wonderful manner, until it is thought, that between thirty and forty have experienced the sweet powers of emancipating or delivering grace.

I visited them a few days ago, at the time of an evening meeting, and after hearing a profitable discourse delivered, I then had the privilege of hearing the testimonies of ten or fifteen of the happy converts and although I had heard from good authority concerning the work in that place, yet I must acknowledge with

the ancient queen, that the one half had never been told me. That which most affected my heart, was the testimony of a little girl, in her ninth year, while she rose upon her feet, and it appeared with the greatest deliberation, and began in these melting strains; "Oh," said she, "the blessed Jesus has converted my little soul, and there is a little crown of glory laid up in heaven and I expect to wear it in a short time." Thus she continued to speak and exhort her friends, until it seemed that every heart must feel and relent. Truly the work is glorious. Party spirit, which before has taken a high stand is now falling to the ground like Dagon before the ark, until about seventy of old and young are sweetly united to follow the Lamb, and the work is still rapidly spreading into different parts of the town; and I think that it is that information, that will prevail, and it is my sincere prayer to Almighty God, that it might spread from country to country, from kingdom to kingdom, until reformation and the knowledge of the truth cover the earth, as the waters cover the mighty deep.

I now leave the subject of the reformation, and would just observe; as it respects the state of religion in this part of the town, where I reside, notwithstanding we have some trials and labour, yet the prospect in general is encouraging. I think that the Lord has converted a number of late; we expect to attend to the ordinance of baptism shortly, salvation is sweetly sounding in the name of Jesus Christ, and satan's kingdom is losing ground. Even so, Amen.

I subscribe myself a servant to all God's people for Jesus sake.

THOMAS PARK.

Infidelity.—It is well known that Mr. Hume himself was never so much puzzled as when peremptorily asked by a lady at Bath, to declare upon his honour, as a gentleman, whether he would choose his own confidential domesticks from such as held his own princi-

ples, or from those who conscientiously believed in the truths of revelation. *He frankly decided in favour of the latter.*

PLEASANT INTELLIGENCE.

From a letter by a Rev. Gentleman in Philadelphia, to his friends in Providence, we are permitted to make the following extract. It contains intelligence of a pleasing nature, as it shews that the Particular Baptists in England, are giving ground to liberal principles.—*Ed. R. I. Baptist.*

“In a letter recently received by me from England, my correspondent in writing of the great, popular, and highly celebrated Dr. Robert Hall, says, “free communion is gaining ground among the Particular Baptists, in England,” and adds, a LIBERAL spirit, is the spirit of Christianity.”

AFRICAN ANTS.

These insects sometimes set forward in such multitudes, that the whole earth seems to be in motion. A corps of them attacked and covered an elephant quietly feeding in a pasture. In eight hours, nothing was to be seen on the spot, but the skeleton of that enormous animal, neatly and completely picked. The business was done, and the enemy marched on after fresh prey. Such power have the smallest creatures when acting in concert.—*Bp. Horne.*

To Readers.—We have thrown out the third and fourth numbers of the Baptist together, that we may be able, for the future, to publish the work early in every month. The first and second, it will be recollected, were issued toward the close of October and November. Our readers will perceive that this arrangement will not multiply their numbers, and it is only, that we may give them, for the future early in the month, as stated above.

From the London Magazine.

THE ORPHAN.

I was but a child when my father fell,
 And a child when I saw my mother die,
 But though years have gone I remember well
 My father's last look, my mother's last sigh.
 She sought the red field where the war had been,
 And she bore me where mangled bodies lay ;
 But I knew not the horrors of such a scene,
 And 'mid all my young heart smiled—and was gay.

On the ground I saw my sire reclined—
 But I knew not then he was dying there,
 And still I prattled, and smiled, and twined
 My fingers around his bloody hair.
 Though so faintly he breathed “ my son, my son !
 Blessing me there with his parting breath—
 Ah ! little I deemed that his days were done—
 The look he gave was the look of death.

And there was my mother sitting by,
 And her watch beside my sire she kept,
 But no gathering tear had dull'd her eye—
 I thought her happy who had not wept.
 How I wondered when the night came on,
 They had made the cold green earth their bed—
 But at morning my mother too was gone—
 And I was an orphan—both were dead.

LIFE IS A VAPOUR.

I dream'd—I saw a little rosy child,
 With flaxen ringlets, in a garden playing ;
 Now stooping here, and then afar off straying,
 As flower or butterfly his feet beguil'd.

'Twas chang'd ; one summer's day I stepp'd aside,
 To let him pass ; his face had manhood's seeming,
 And that full eye of blue was fondly beaming
 On a fair maiden, whom he call'd “ his bride.”

Once more ; 'twas evening, and the cheerful fire,
 I saw a group of youthful forms surrounding,
 The room with harmless pleasantry resounding ;
 And in the midst I mark'd the smiling sire.

The heaven's were clouded—and I heard the tone
 Of a slow moving bell—the white hair'd man had gone !